GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PERSONNEL,PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4594
ANSWERED ON:18.04.2001
LETTERS FROM MPS
CHINTAMAN NAVSHA WANAGA

Will the Minister of PERSONNEL,PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has fixed any time limit for the reply of letter written by MPs and Ex. MPs to Union Government offices and State Government offices;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has reviewed instructions from time to time in view of changing scenario to strengthen the Parliamentary system of the country;

(c) whether such review enable the MPs and Ex. MPs to report to the Ministry in case reply to their letters is not received within time limit either from the Union Government offices or from the State Government offices; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS & PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN THE MINIS PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE)

(a)&(b): Yes Sir. Time Limits are fixed for reply of letter written by MPs, a member of public, a recognized association or a public body, to Union Government offices vide 11th Edition of Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CS-MOP). The provisions laid down in the CS-MOP are not applicable to State Governments. However, the State Governments normally prescribe their own guidelines in this regard. Guidelines exist in the CS-MOP, for dealing with the letters received from the Hon`ble Member of Parliament vide para 57 and Time Limits are prescribed vide para 60. (Extracts of para 57 & 60 enclosed as Annex -A and Annex-B, respectively).

(c)&(d): The concerned MPs and Ex. MPs are at liberty to approach the respective Ministry in case a reply to their letters is not received within the prescribed time limit.

ANNEXURE-A

EXTRACTS OF PARA 57 OF THE CENTRAL SECRETARIAT MANUAL OF OFFICE PROCEDURE

57. Correspondence with Members of Parliament:-

(1) Communications received from Members of Parliament should be attended to promptly.

(2) Where a communication is addressed to a Minister, it should, as far as practicable, be replied to by, the Minister himself. In other cases, a reply should normally be issued over the signature of an officer of the rank Secretary only.

(3) Where, however, a communication is addressed to the head of an attached or subordinate office, Public Sector Undertakings Financial Institutions (including nationalized banks), Division/Branch Incharge in a Ministry/Department/Organisation, it should be replied to by the addressee himself. In routine matters not involving question of policy, he may send an appropriate reply on his own. In matters involving questions of policy the officer should have prior consultation with higher authorities before sending a reply. It should, however, be ensured that minimum level at which such replies are sent to Members of Parliament is that of Under Secretary and that also in letter from only.

(4) Normally information sought by a Member should be supplied unless it is of such a nature that it would have been denied to him even if asked for on the floor of the Houses of Parliament.

(5) As far as possible, in corresponding with Member of Parliament, pre-printed or cyclostyled replies should be avoided.

(6) In case, a reference from, an ex-Member of Parliament (or MP who has not been re-elected) is addressed to a Minister or Secretary, reply to such reference may be sent by the concerned Divisional Head after obtaining approval of the Secretary of the ministry/department. In case the reference is addressed to a lower level officer, reply to such reference could be sent by the officer on his own in non-policy cases and after obtaining approval of the higher authorities in policy cases. However, the minimum level at which reply could be sent should be that of an Under Secretary and that too in letter from only.

ANNEXURE-B

EXTRACTS OF PARA 60 OF THE CENTRAL SECRETARIAT MANUAL OF OFFICE PROCEDURE

60. Prompt response to letters received:-

(1) Each communication received from a Member of Parliament, a member of the public, a recognized association or a public body will be acknowledged within 15 days, followed by a reply within the next 15 days of acknowledgement sent.

(2) Where (i) delay is anticipated in sending a final reply, or
(ii) information has to be obtained from another Ministry or another office, an interim reply will be sent within a month (from the date of receipt) indicating the possible date by which a final reply can be given.

(3) If any such communication is wrongly addressed to a department, it will be transferred promptly (within a week) to the appropriate department under intimation to the party concerned.

(4) Where the request of a member of the public cannot be acceded to far any reason, reasons for not acceding to such a request should be given.

(5) As far as possible, requests from members of public, should be looked at from the user`s point of view and not solely from the point of view of what may be administratively convenient.